

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SSC-01

/057 W

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R 301158Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2071

INFO COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 20642

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJ: NEW MILITARY APPOINTMENTS

REF: A) BANGKOK 20539 (PR 291253Z SEP 75)

B) BANGKOK 20535 (291153Z SEP 75)

SUMMARY: FOL IS LIST OF KEY MILITARY APPOINTMENTS IN THAI ARMED FORCES ANNOUNCED SEPT 29. LIST IS LARGELY AS PROPOSED BY RETIRING THAI SUPREME COMMANDER, GEN KRIT, BUT THERE IS EVERY PROSPECT THAT THERE WILL BE CONTINUING EVIDENCE OF FACTIONALISM WITHIN THAI ARMED FORCES, AS SUPPORTERS OF KRIT AND OF DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PRAMAN VIE FOR POWER. END SUMMARY.

1. LISTED BELOW ARE THE MORE IMPORTANT NEW MILITARY APPOINTMENTS OUT OF THE TOTAL LIST OF 141 ANNOUNCED BY THE RTG ON SEPT 29.

2. SUPREME COMMAND:

ADMIRAL SA NGAT CHALOYU - SUPREME COMMANDER

AIR CHIEF MARSHAL KAMON DECHATUNGKHA, DEUUTY SUPREME COMMANDER

GENERAL KRIANGSAK CHAMANAN - ASSISTANT SUPREME COMMANDER

GENERAL CHAROEN PHONGPHANIT - CHIEF OF STAFF OF SUPREME COMMAND

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GENERAL SAIYUT KOETPHON - DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF OF SUPREME COMMAND

LT. GENERAL PRALONG WIRAPRIYA - CHIEF OF STAFF OF SUPREME COMMAND HEADQUARTERS

LT. GENERAL CHAWENG YANGCHAROEN - DIRECTOR OF JOINT OPERATIONS

MAJOR GENERAL CHALOENSAK CHUTHAPHONG - CHIEF, DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

MAJOR GENERAL WIRIN BIAWKHAIMUK - DEPUTY DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF RECORDS

MAJOR GENERAL BUNRIT THANTRANON, COMMANDER OF THE ARMED FORCES SECURITY CENTER

3. ROYAL THAI ARMY:

GENERAL BUNCHAI BANRUNGPHONG - ROYAL THAI ARMY COMMANDER IN CHIEF

GENERAL CHOTE HIRANYAOTHITI - ROYAL THAI ARMY DEPUTY COMMANDER IN CHIEF

LT. GENERAL CHALAT HIRANYATHITI, ASSISTANT COMMANDER IN CHIEF, ROYAL THAI ARMY

LT. GENERAL PRASOET THAMMASIRI, ASSISTANT COMMANDER IN CHIEF, ROYAL THAI ARMY

LT. GENERAL PHON THANNAPHUM, DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF, ROYAL THAI ARMY

LT. GENERAL YOT THEPHATSADIN, COMMANDER, 1ST ARMY

LT. GENERAL WITHUN YASAWAT, ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF FOR PERSONNEL, ROYAL THAI ARMY

MAJOR GENERAL SOMSOK PHANCHAMANON, COMMANDER, 3RD ARMY

MAJOR GENERAL UAM CHIRAPONG, DIRECTOR, TERRITORIAL DEFENSE

MAJOR GENERAL ARUN THAWATHASIN, COMMANDER, 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION

GENERAL PRACHUAB PUNTHANGUN, ATTACHED TO ROYAL THAI ARMY HQS.

4. SUPREME COMMAND. AS INDICATED IN REF B, THE SUPREME COMMAND AS PRESENTLY CONSTITUTED IS A SHELL WITH LITTLE POWER. THE POSITIONS OF SUPREME COMMANDER AND DEPUTY SUPREME COMMANDER HAVE NO INHERENT POWER OF THEMSELVES.

5. THE MAN WHO APPARENTLY LOST THE MOST WHEN DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PRAMAN BACKED DOWN IN HIS RECENT CONFRONTATION WITH GEN. KRIT WAS GENERAL SAIYUT KOETPHON, WHO WAS SLATED BY PRAMAN TO BECOME THE ASSISTANT COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE ARMY, POSSIBLY IN LINE TO REPLACE GENERAL BUNCHAI BAMRUANGPHONG, THE NEW ROYAL THAI ARMY COMMANDER IN CHIEF, UPON HIS RETIREMENT NEXT YEAR. SAIYUT IS NOW SHUNTED OFF TO BE THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF OF SUPREME COMMAND HEADQUARTERS. HOWEVER, HE IS STILL YOUNG ENOUGH (53) THAT HE MAY
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RECOUP HIS FORTUNES IF PRAMAN CONTINUES TO TIGHTEN HIS GRIP ON THE MILITARY STRUCTURE IN THE NEAR FUTURE. IN ADDITION THERE IS STILL A POSSIBILITY THAT HE MAY RETAIN HIS ISOC FUNCTIONS.

GENERAL PRACHUAB SUNTHANGKUN CONTINUES TO REMAIN IN LIMBO. MAJOR GENERAL WIRIN BAIWKHAIMUK, GENERAL KRIT'S AIDE, WAS ASSIGNED AS DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE RECORDS DEPARTMENT OF THE SUPREME COMAND.

6. ROYAL THAI ARMY - IT IS IN THE ALL IMPORTANT ROYAL THAI ARMY

THAT KRIT WON HIS MOST IMPORTANT VICTORIES. HIS MEN WERE APPOINTED TO ALL THE KEY POSITIONS, INSURING THE CONTINUANCE OF AT LEAST SOME INFLUENCE FOR THE COMING YEAR. HOWEVER THE WAY THE LIST WAS HANDLED MAY HAVE DAMAGED HIS RELATIONS WITH BUNCHAI. GENERALS BUNCHAI AND CHOT ARE SCHEDULED TO RETIRE IN 1976, AS IS LT. GENERAL PRASOET, WHO WAS PERSUADED TO GIVE UP HIS POSITION AS COMMANDER OF THE IMPORTANT 1ST ARMY REGION WHICH INCLUDES BANGKOK. GENERAL YOT THEPHATSADIN, A KRIT MAN AND A CLOSE FRIEND OF GENERAL KRIANGSAK CHAMANAN, WAS NAMED TO SUCCEED PRASOERT. MAJ. GENERAL ARUN THAWATHASIN, ANOTHER KRIT MAN, WAS APPOINTED AS THE COMMANDER OF THE 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION, WHICH, ON THE BASIS OF PAST EXPERIENCE, IS WIDELY CONSIDERED TO BE THE KEY UNIT IN ANY "COUP" ATTEMPT. LT. GEN. WITHUN YASAWAT HAS RETURNED FROM LIMBO TO ASSUME A LINE JOB AS ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF FOR PERSONNEL. AT THIS POINT MOST MILITARY OBSERVERS DO NOT SEE THIS POSITION AS A SPRINGBOARD FOR GREATER POWER OR INFLUENCE.

7. COMMENT: THE LIST MEANS THAT KRIT WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE SOME INFLUENCE WITHIN THE ARMY IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE, BUT IT DOES NOT PORTEND AN END TO THE INFIGHTING WITHIN THE RANKS OF THE MILITARY. IF, AS NOW EXPECTED, PRAMAN REMAINS AS MINISTER OF DEFENSE, THE STRUGGLE WILL CONTINUE AS PRAMAN, PERHAPS WITH THE HELP OF BUNCHAI, ATTEMPTS TO BRING HIS SUPPORTERS INTO POSITIONS OF POWER AND KRIT'S MEN, WHETHER FOLLOWING KRIT'S ORDERS OR FOR THEIR OWN PROTECTION, RESIST THESE MOVES. THE NEXT PUBLIC INDICATION OF THIS STRUGGLE AND ON HOW WELL PRAMAN IS SUCCEEDING IN CONSOLIDATING HIS POWER MAY NOT COME UNTIL APRIL, 1976, WHEN ANOTHER ROUND OF NEW APPOINTMENTS WILL ROUTINELY BE MADE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY PERSONNEL, ARMED FORCES, POLITICAL STABILITY, PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 SEP 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BANGKO20642
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750338-0992
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975093/aaaaabuz.tel
Line Count: 144
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 BANGKOK 20539
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 JUL 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <24 NOV 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEW MILITARY APPOINTMENTS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, MILI, TH, (SA NGAT CHALOYU), (KAMOM DECHATUNGKHA), (KRIANGSAK CHAMANAN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006